Youth Exchange Handbook

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Youth Exchange

The primary audience for this guide is Rotary district-level leaders who participate in Rotary's Youth Exchange program. The guide can also be useful for club-level leaders who participate in their district's Youth Exchange program. The information in this publication reflects the best practices of Rotary districts, and any policy references are to the **Rotary Code of Policies**. Decisions made by the Rotary International Board of Directors take precedence over information in this publication.

STATEMENT OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH YOUTH

Rotary International strives to create and maintain a safe environment for all youth who participate in Rotary activities. To the best of their ability, Rotarians, Rotarians' spouses and partners, and other volunteers must safeguard the children and young people they come into contact with and protect them from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.

Email questions or comments to **youthexchange@rotary.org**.

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INTRODUCTION TO ROTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE

Rotary clubs channel their commitment to service at home and abroad through five Avenues of Service, which are the foundation of club activity. Youth Service, one of the five, recognizes the importance of empowering youth through leadership development programs. Rotary Youth Exchange is one of many youth leadership development programs offered by Rotary.

Living in a foreign country is a powerful way to gain global understanding and promote peace. Through Youth Exchange, students learn a new language, discover different cultures and customs, and make friendships that last a lifetime.

The objectives of the Rotary Youth Exchange program include:

- Instilling international understanding and goodwill in students
- Creating positive change by empowering youth
- Making lasting connections for host clubs, host families, communities, and the students involved

Rotary districts administer the Youth Exchange program in collaboration with local Rotary clubs. A Rotary district is a group of Rotary clubs in a specific area or region. Rotary has approximately 530 districts worldwide. Unlike many exchange programs, Rotary Youth Exchange is managed by volunteers, resulting in relatively low administrative costs and a strong support network of engaged Rotarians. Rotary's youth protection policies and district Youth Exchange certification program ensure that the safety of our youth is the highest priority.

Types of Exchanges

Rotary districts can choose to conduct long-term exchanges, short-term exchanges, or both. Exchanges are typically open to students ages 15 to 19, but districts determine the exact age ranges. Flexibility in the Youth Exchange program allows it to be adapted to fit the needs of any student who qualifies.

Long-term exchanges usually last one academic year, during which the student lives with multiple families in the host country and is required to attend school.

Short-term exchanges last from a few days to several months, often take place when school is not in session, and vary widely among districts. Participants typically stay with a local family in the host country, but they might also attend a youth camp or tour the country with students from around the world.

Both programs need to meet the certification requirements. Most of the information in this handbook applies to the long-term exchange program, which has additional program elements.

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ROLE OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

District Certification Program

Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention Meeting

Youth Exchange Committee

Rotary International supports districts that participate in Rotary Youth Exchange by:

- Administering a district certification program (see more about the certification process below)
- Providing guidance and ensuring compliance with Rotary policies
- Helping them communicate with their partners abroad and responding to program inquiries from Rotarians and the general public
- Developing resources for networking, communicating, and promoting the Youth Exchange program, such as the Youth Exchange Officers directory, Youth Exchange newsletter, and branded promotional materials available in the Rotary Brand Center and on Shop Rotary

This chapter describes the role of the Rotary International Secretariat in the Youth Exchange program.

District Certification Program

Only districts that meet the following requirements and maintain official certification from Rotary International may participate in Youth Exchange.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION

These requirements apply to both short- and long-term exchanges, unless otherwise indicated within the Youth Exchange section of the Rotary Code of Policies:

INCORPORATION AND LIABILITY INSURANCE

- Establish a corporation or similar formal legal entity that includes the district Youth Exchange program.
- Secure adequate liability insurance with coverage and limits appropriate for the region where the district is located.
- Ensure each inbound student has a travel insurance policy that meets Rotary's minimum requirements, explained in chapter 4. The parents or legal guardians of the student are responsible for the payment of all insurance and associated costs.

YOUTH PROTECTION AND SAFETY

- Develop and enforce a district youth protection policy, including guidelines for reporting allegations. Read the Rotary Youth Protection Guide for youth protection requirements and to see a sample district youth protection policy.
- Conduct a thorough screening of all Rotarian and non-Rotarian volunteers including having them complete an application, criminal background check, reference check, and in-person interview. Host families must also meet these requirements, as well as receive announced and unannounced (or short-notice) home visits from a Youth Exchange officer.
- Conduct a thorough screening of student applicants including having them complete an application and in-person interview. At least one of the student's parents or legal guardians must attend the interview.
- Provide mandatory orientation sessions that cover program rules and abuse prevention and awareness training: one for students going abroad and their parents or legal guardians prior to departure, and another for students you host upon their arrival.
- Supply students with contact information for club- and district-level individuals who can support the student during the exchange. Include emergency service and local medical information, as well as a 24-hour emergency district "hotline" number.
- Establish a procedure for moving a student into a temporary, pre-screened host family in case of an allegation against a host family member.
- Report all serious incidents and allegations of abuse and harassment to Rotary Youth Exchange staff within 72 hours.

COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING

- Develop a process to ensure all participating clubs and volunteers within the district comply with Rotary's certification requirements.
- Implement a document retention policy for student, volunteer, and host family applications and materials related to Youth Exchange, including records of student incidents and individuals who are prohibited from participating in Rotary youth programs.
- Make sure the district is sending students abroad to a district that is certified by Rotary International to participate in the Youth Exchange program.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND TRAINING

- Train all Rotarian and non-Rotarian volunteers.
- Select a Rotarian counselor to support the exchange student (find more information on this role in chapter 3). This individual must receive specialized training on how to deal with issues of sexual abuse and harassment, and may not be a member of the student's host family.
- Make sure all long-term hosting is voluntary and that long-term exchange students have more than one host family.

A district must submit to RI proof of minimum certification requirements. RI staff will review the documents and inform district leaders about their certification status. Districts cannot plan or arrange any exchanges until their district's certification status is confirmed by letter. To start the certification process and obtain the certification form, email **youthexchange@rotary.org**.

CERTIFICATION RENEWAL

Every year, the district must renew its certification to prove that it still meets RI's requirements for participating in the program. In May, Rotary will send the incoming district governor and incoming district Youth Exchange chair a certification renewal form to sign and return confirming their district's compliance.

RECERTIFICATION

Every five to seven years, Rotary conducts an in-depth review of the district's compliance with certification requirements. The following documents must be submitted to Rotary for recertification: proof of status as a legal entity, proof of liability insurance, and the district's youth protection policy.

PARTICIPATION BY NONCERTIFIED DISTRICTS IS PROHIBITED

Only certified districts may participate in the Rotary Youth Exchange program. Planning or arranging exchanges with noncertified districts is prohibited and could result in decertification, with a possible suspension of participation in future Youth Exchange activities.

SPECIAL CASE DISTRICT CERTIFICATIONS

OUTBOUND-ONLY CERTIFICATION

Outbound-only (one-way) certification allows the district to send students but not host them. The outbound-only certification process is simpler than traditional certification.

MULTINATIONAL DISTRICT CERTIFICATION

Districts that encompass multiple countries, referred to as multinational districts, must verify that certification requirements are met in each country that plans to participate in the Youth Exchange program. Multinational districts can apply for certification for select countries within the district or the entirety of the district.

To learn more or to start the certification process, email **youthexchange@rotary.org**.

Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention Meeting

The Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention is held immediately before the annual Rotary International Convention. Join Youth Exchange leaders from around the world to share ideas, learn how to enhance your exchanges, and build lasting connections with Youth Exchange officers at the club, district, and multidistrict levels from around the world. Although the Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention is open to all convention attendees, including Youth Exchange students, the meeting content is designed for Youth Exchange officers. Plan now to attend the next Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention. **Learn more.**

Youth Exchange Committee

The RI president often appoints a Youth Exchange Committee to advise Rotary International's Board of Directors on all aspects of the program and to develop content for the Youth Exchange Officers Preconvention. Rotarians may contact members of this committee to request advice and share feedback. Email **youthexchange@rotary.org** for committee contact information.

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BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

District

Rotary Club

Multidistrict Youth Exchange Groups

Leadership Organizational Chart

Youth Exchange programs are implemented by districts, with local Rotarians making all exchange arrangements. Clear leadership roles, organized committees, and well-trained and qualified leaders at the district and club levels will ensure your program's success for years to come.

Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

An effective Youth Exchange program relies on dedicated Rotarians serving in leadership positions. Although positions can vary by district and club, all leaders should clearly understand the division of responsibilities, at both levels, for sending and hosting students. You can help simplify communication and administrative tasks by mirroring the district's committee roles in your club's committee structure. Here are some common responsibilities that will help your team succeed:

District

Through the district certification process with Rotary International, districts create and implement the administrative policies and procedures that enable their clubs to participate in the Youth Exchange program.

DISTRICT GOVERNOR

District governors are responsible for supervising and controlling district programs, including all Youth Exchange activities. They should be familiar with program guidelines and ensure compliance with certification requirements. Governors have authority over district appointments.

Responsibilities:

- Appoint a district Youth Exchange chair and committee.
- Support and monitor club and district Youth Exchange programs to ensure activities are conducted appropriately.
- Address any problems that arise and communicate with governors in other districts on behalf of a club or district chair, as needed.
- If necessary, intervene directly to administer the program, even if responsibilities have been delegated to other district and club officers.

YOUTH PROTECTION OFFICER

RI recommends appointing a district youth protection officer to foster safe environments across all youth programs. This person should have professional experience in handling abuse and harassment issues, be aware of RI policies, and be familiar with relevant local and national laws. More information about Rotary International's youth protection policies can be found in the **Rotary Youth Protection Guide**.

Responsibilities:

- Maintain records of all allegations and individuals who are prohibited from participating in a Rotary youth program.
- Protect all parties involved, and make sure allegations are properly handled according to local laws and district policy.
- Work with the district and clubs to inform all Rotarians of their obligations under both district policy and local laws.
- Review and maintain an archive of all screened volunteers, including applications, criminal background checks, and reference checks, in compliance with local laws. Alternatively, serve as a liaison to an external firm contracted for this purpose.
- Advise the district youth program committees about developments in youth protection-related educational and training programs.

If a district youth protection officer is not appointed, a member of the Youth Exchange committee should be designated for maintaining youth protection policies and procedures for the Youth Exchange program.

DISTRICT YOUTH EXCHANGE CHAIR AND COMMITTEE

The Youth Exchange district chair manages Youth Exchange activities within the district and communicates with Rotary International, the district governor, and clubs. In consultation with the district governor, the chair often appoints the district committee and defines specific responsibilities for each member. Here are district committee member responsibilities:

SETTING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Develop district program guidelines and rules for students that comply with RI policy, including:

- Behavioral expectations
- Protocols for addressing problems
- Process for approving student travel requests

EFFECTIVE APPOINTMENTS AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

Governors are encouraged not to change more than 33 percent of the Youth Exchange committee at any time to promote continuity. They are also advised to place the governor-elect or governor-nominee on the Youth Exchange committee so the individual can become more familiar with the program.

The RI Board of Directors advocates a three-year limit on the length of service of any one chair. However, because of the specific knowledge and experience required to administer the Youth Exchange program, that limit is sometimes extended to allow time to properly train a successor. A training plan for incoming chairs that includes shadowing and mentoring can lead to a successful transition.

YOUTH EXCHANGE FINANCES

The governor and district finance committee should oversee the Youth Exchange funds. Youth Exchange funds must be held separately from other district funds and be used only for Youth Exchange activities. Signatories can include the Youth Exchange chair, a member of the district finance committee, or a designated proxy. Some districts choose to have separate Youth Exchange bank accounts or to include Youth Exchange finances in the main district bank account as a separate line item or fund designation in order to delineate between funds.

Hosting districts or clubs should provide a monthly allowance for the student in an amount determined by the sending and hosting districts. The allowance should cover meals eaten outside of the host family's home and public transportation costs. The district Youth Exchange committee must submit an annual budget to the governor and district finance committee for approval. The district Youth Exchange committee and district treasurer must prepare a semiannual financial report to the governor on the program.

YOUTH PROTECTION

Coordinate youth protection efforts within the Youth Exchange program, in consultation with the youth protection officer and in adherence with the **Rotary Youth Protection Guide**:

- Screen all adult volunteers, including, but not limited to, committee members, host families, and Rotarian counselors. This includes interviewing volunteers to determine their suitability for working with youth, making sure volunteers complete an application, and conducting background checks, including references and law enforcement public records.
- Train host families, students, and adult volunteers on youth protection policies.
- Make sure that any individual who has admitted to, been convicted of, or otherwise found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment is prohibited from working with youth.
- Develop a communications plan that includes emergency contacts for students.
- Establish procedures for supporting students after an allegation of abuse or harassment, including removing alleged offenders from contact with youth in Rotary programs, determining criteria for moving a student to temporary housing, ensuring student's parents or legal guardians are informed, and providing support services.

RISK AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Implement risk management policies and a crisis management plan:

- Develop procedures for reporting and handling incidents, such as early returns and allegations of abuse or harassment, and inform all adult volunteers about the district's allegation response reporting guidelines.
- Establish guidelines for the removal of students, adult volunteers, and any other participants who do not comply with program requirements.
- Prepare emergency response procedures for crises such as natural disasters, health matters, and civil or political unrest.
- Make sure backup host families are available and prescreened for emergency situations.
- Set required insurance levels for inbound students and necessary liability insurance for the district program, and coordinate coverage and carriers with the hosting district. Assist outbound students in obtaining insurance.
- Enforce policy that requires parents or legal guardians to give permission for their child to travel outside of the host community.

REPORTING

Designate one person, usually the district chair or youth protection officer, to report the following to RI:

- All serious incidents involving a student, such as serious accidents, deaths, crimes, and allegations of abuse or harassment within 72 hours of learning of the situation. Includes students who return home before their exchange is completed.
- Program activity through the annual Youth Exchange survey administered by RI

RECORD KEEPING

Establish a document retention policy and security measures.

- Determine whether records will be kept with the club or district.
- Specify how long records will be kept, in accordance with local laws.
- Maintain documentation such as training logs, volunteer-screening records, incident reports, and individuals who are prohibited from participating in Rotary youth programs.
- Set security access for sensitive information.

SUPPORTING CLUBS IN YOUR DISTRICT

Work with Rotary clubs to:

- Train club-level Youth Exchange committees within your district
- Establish expectations for inbound and outbound students
- Provide information on resources to help strengthen clubs' Youth Exchange activities
- Encourage clubs to involve alumni in the program and organize activities for alumni

PROGRAMMING FOR SENDING STUDENTS ABROAD

Manage the following activities:

- Establish contacts with international certified districts to arrange possible exchange placements.
- Help clubs find, interview, and select students.
- Provide a student and parent orientation before departure.
- Coordinate all travel and visa arrangements for students (unless managed by a club or multidistrict group on behalf of the district).
- Serve as liaison between students, parents, and travel agency to make sure itineraries for the exchange are available.
- Review reports received from students abroad and respond to any irregularities they report.
- Connect returning students with Rotary alumni associations.

PROGRAMMING FOR HOSTING STUDENTS

Manage the following activities:

- Identify clubs in your district to host exchange students.
- Assist clubs in selecting and orienting host families.
- Serve as liaison between the district's host Rotary clubs and the students' home districts.
- Coordinate all travel and visa arrangements for students (unless managed by a multidistrict group on behalf of the district).
- Coordinate orientation for students upon arrival, including abuse and harassment awareness.
- Provide guidance and support to students, counselors, and clubs as issues arise.

Rotary Club

The Youth Exchange program depends on Rotary clubs, Rotarians and their families, and the community to make local arrangements and build an effective support system for sending and hosting students. All clubs are encouraged, but not required, to participate in Youth Exchange. Club members can participate in Youth Exchange activities, either as a member of their club's Youth Exchange committee, a host parent, or a Rotarian counselor.

CLUB PRESIDENT

The club president appoints the club Youth Exchange chair, who should be someone with previous Youth Exchange experience. The president also oversees the selection of the club committee and supports the club's Youth Exchange activities.

CLUB YOUTH EXCHANGE CHAIR AND COMMITTEE

The club Youth Exchange chair plans, implements, and supports all activities involving sending and hosting long- and short-term exchange students.

The club Youth Exchange committee provides support as directed by the chair. The size and scope of this committee will vary according to the size of the club and the extent of its involvement in the program.

PARTICIPATING CLUB

Each participating club assumes the following responsibilities:

- Coordinate club Youth Exchange activities with the district program and ensure compliance with RI and district policies.
- Attend district Youth Exchange meetings.
- Establish expectations for student participation in club meetings and activities.
- Ensure students attend mandatory functions, such as orientations or district conferences.
- Obtain feedback from students about the program.
- Notify district Youth Exchange chair of any student issues or concerns.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SENDING STUDENTS ABROAD

- Promote the program to students in your community, distribute applications, and identify potential candidates.
- Interview and select students for the exchange.
- Assign a Rotarian counselor for each student.
- Maintain contact with district leadership who coordinate sending students outbound.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RECEIVING INBOUND STUDENTS

- Interview and screen potential host families.
- Coordinate selection and orientation of host families and maintain contact with host families throughout the student's exchange.
- Establish and maintain contact with inbound students before they arrive.
- Coordinate students' arrival, welcome, and orientation.
- Serve as liaison between your Rotary club and the schools that students attend
- Assign a Rotarian counselor to each student.
- Maintain contact with your district leaders who coordinate receiving inbound students.
- Arrange the disbursement of a monthly allowance. For more information, see Youth Exchange Finances on page 12.

ROTARIAN COUNSELOR

Serving as liaison between the student, Rotary club, host family, and community at large, the Rotarian counselor plays a crucial role in the success of the Youth Exchange program. The counselor serves as the student's primary Rotary contact, easing the student's transition into the country and the community through regular personal contact throughout the year. A Rotarian counselor must be assigned to every outbound and inbound Youth Exchange student. A Rotarian counselor for outbound students helps prepare for departure and provides support with their return. The responsibilities listed below refer to a Rotarian counselor in the club hosting the exchange student.

Host Rotarian counselor responsibilities:

- Establish contact with the student before departure or arrival, explain the expectations of the club and the district, and maintain and document regular contact (at least once a month).
- Counsel the student in matters such as choosing classes, making friends, and participating in activities.
- Help the student adapt to the culture and language.
- Work with the community and the student's school to ensure the student is involved in positive activities and community life.
- Inform the student about abuse and harassment prevention and create a supportive atmosphere in which the student feels comfortable discussing any concerns.
- Serve as an advocate for the student in any matter.
- For long-term exchanges, be a consistent resource for the student as they rotate through host families during the exchange.

COUNSELOR PROFILE

Counselors must be assigned to every outbound and inbound student in all exchange programs. The counselor should enjoy working with young people, be an advocate for the student, and be trained to respond to problems or concerns that may arise during the exchange, including allegations of abuse or harassment.

The counselor should identify as the same gender as the participant. Members of a student's host family are not eligible to be their counselor. The Rotarian counselor should not be a close friend or relative of other volunteers involved with the exchange student, or have authority over the exchange, such as a school principal or Youth Exchange chair.

Multidistrict Youth Exchange Groups

Multidistrict Youth Exchange groups are administrative bodies made up of several districts, established to support exchange activities. Many districts have found it streamlines administrative duties and can ease the burden placed on participating districts. Although each multidistrict group operates differently, many arrange training and orientation for students, process applications and visa paperwork, negotiate group rates for travel and insurance, and promote the program in a specific geographic area. If your district is interested in joining an existing group or starting a new one, email **youthexchange@rotary.org** for more information.

Leadership Organizational Chart

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GUIDELINES FOR SENDING A YOUTH EXCHANGE STUDENT ABROAD

Promoting the Program and Finding Students

Selecting Students

Placing Students With Host Districts

Preparing Outbound Students and Their Parents or Legal Guardians

Engaging Parents or Legal Guardians in Youth Exchange

Maintaining Communication With Students

As a Rotarian sending students abroad, you can promote Youth Exchange to prospective students, select suitable candidates, place students with host districts, and plan an orientation for students and their families. During the exchange, you should maintain contact with the students abroad to ensure a successful experience and provide them with guidance and support. When students return home from their exchange, you play an important role by helping them and their families adjust to life after the exchange and encouraging a continued connection to Rotary through alumni and other youth program opportunities.

Promoting the Program and Finding Students

Promoting your program to a wide range of young people will help you find suitable candidates for exchanges. Start by inviting current and past participants of Rotary's other youth programs, such as **Interact** and **RYLA**, to apply. They know Rotary, possess strong leadership skills, and are dedicated to increasing global awareness — ideal characteristics for representing Rotary and their country through Youth Exchange.

Expand your audience by creating a district Youth Exchange website to promote the program. Share Youth Exchange stories and opportunities through your club and district social media accounts. Post photos of participants (with their permission) having fun, exploring their host countries, and meeting new people.

You can also distribute promotional materials at schools, libraries, community and athletic centers, and other places where young people gather (be sure to ask for permission from school and community administrators). Highlight the cultural, professional, and educational benefits of Youth Exchange, as well as Rotary's commitment to youth protection and its strong network of community leaders. Involve club members who work in public relations, marketing, and advertising to help create professional-looking brochures and flyers.

Selecting Students

All interested students who meet the following basic requirements should be given the opportunity to apply to the program.

MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Ages 15-19. Exchange candidates' ages must be agreed upon by both the sending and hosting districts before finalizing the exchange and in accordance with the laws and regulations of both countries. Students may be required by the participating districts to be older than 15 or younger than 19 in order to participate.
- Above-average academic performance
- Ability to express oneself clearly and effectively in their native language
- Demonstrated leadership skills

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Residency within a certified Rotary district
- Adaptability to changing surroundings and host families
- Proficiency in or commitment to learning the language of the host country
- Openness to participating in the host country's cultural activities and customs
- Enthusiasm for sharing perspectives and culture of their home country with members of the host community
- Ability to positively represent Rotary as an ambassador for peace and understanding
- Complete and unqualified support of parents or legal guardians
- For long-term exchanges, committed to attending school and completing assignments

DIVERSITY IN STUDENT SELECTION

Rotary clubs and districts are encouraged to consider students from all backgrounds and should strive to administer their program in a manner that avoids discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or gender identity, while not sacrificing student safety or comfort with the hosting arrangement. Because cultural norms and local laws differ around the world on these kinds of issues, adequate care should be taken to make sure that all parties involved approve of and are comfortable with the hosting arrangement.

Open communication between the student, parents or legal guardians, host family, and involved clubs and districts is important and helps the host district determine the best placement and environment for the student's needs. Host families should be screened for compatibility with diverse

DISTRICT GRANT FUNDING

The Youth Exchange program is funded completely by Rotary districts and local Rotary clubs. You can use Rotary Foundation **district grants** to fund your youth programs, including Youth Exchange. A district grant can be used to fund scholarships for individual exchanges or for larger activities or events for groups of Youth Exchange students. Districts must be qualified before they can administer the funds, which, like other Rotary Foundation funds, cannot be used for the activities of lineal descendants of Rotarians. Global grants cannot be used to fund Youth Exchange. Learn more by emailing **grants@rotary.org**.

populations in advance so suitable placements may be made, creating a positive experience for all involved.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

Rotary clubs and districts are encouraged to consider students with physical or mental health conditions as potential participants. Many past exchanges involving students with disabilities have proven successful and beneficial to all involved. Clear communication between the student, parents or legal guardians, host family, and involved clubs and districts regarding the needs of the student can prepare all parties for a safe and rewarding experience.

All parties should agree to the level of accommodations provided during the student's stay. Host districts should determine whether they can provide the necessary accommodations, and communicate that with the student's home district as well as the student's parents or legal guardians.

APPLICATION AND INTERVIEW PROCESS

1. Require students to complete an application form that includes a statement of compliance with program rules. Many clubs and districts distribute a short prescreening form to narrow the field of applicants before requesting a completed long application. For samples of commonly used application forms developed by Youth Exchange officers, email **youthexchange@rotary.org**.

2. Hold in-person interviews with both applicants and their parents or legal guardians. These should include at least one interview by a sending club, in addition to interviews by district representatives. Discussion topics should include:
   - Purpose of an exchange and program expectations
   - Student's motivation for participating in a Rotary Youth Exchange
   - How the student feels about spending time away from home, family, and friends
   - Program rules
   - Awareness of world news and issues
   - Serving as an ambassador for their home city, country, and Rotary club
   - Parental custody or legal guardianship of the student and other special considerations regarding the student

   Other interview activities might include asking the student to give a short presentation about themselves and arranging an informal question-and-answer session with Youth Exchange alumni, families of alumni, local school administrators, or others involved in the program.

GOOD TO KNOW
Create and customize your own promotional materials in **Rotary's Brand Center**. You can select templates for your short- or long-term exchanges, add contact information, and choose images that will appeal to young people in your area.

3. After reviewing applications and conducting interviews, select students based on these criteria:
    - Maturity level
    - Ability to exercise good judgment
    - Compatibility with goals of Rotary's program
    - The ability of participating districts to effectively accommodate any physical or mental health needs that are identified
    - Number of students that the sending and host districts can support
        - It's better to send fewer students on exchange than to send students who aren't qualified or who may struggle during their time abroad.
        - If more qualified candidates apply than your program can support, select alternates in the event a selected student is unable to participate.

FINAL ACCEPTANCE

After students have been selected and the district has confirmed their participation, notify students and their parents or legal guardians in writing. Outline any contingencies (for example, participation in orientation meetings or payment of fees) before final acceptance, and include a date when the host country will be confirmed. Students should be aware that their participation in the exchange is not guaranteed until departure and is conditional based on completed attendance of all student orientations and adherence to club and district rules.

Placing Students With Host Districts

After your district Youth Exchange committee selects students to go abroad — based both on students' qualifications and the anticipated number of placements — use your Youth Exchange network to find districts to host the students.

CONNECT WITH OTHER DISTRICTS

Many districts have established longstanding exchange relationships that facilitate more efficient placements of students and strengthen the support system available to students during their exchange. If your district hasn't established exchange relationships or would like to develop new partnerships, Rotary International's directory of Youth Exchange district chairs and multidistrict officers can help you locate the appropriate contact for the district or the country where you'd like to place students. Rotary International emails this directory to Youth Exchange chairs, officers, and contacts quarterly; people with these positions can also access the most recent directory in their My Rotary account. It is your responsibility to confirm that the host district is certified to participate. Email **youthexchange@rotary.org** if you have any questions about certification status or need to access the directory.

MAKE IT OFFICIAL

Once you've located a placement for a student, have the Youth Exchange officers in the participating districts and clubs, the student, and the student's parents or legal guardians sign a written agreement. Make sure the agreement includes the districts' expectations about the exchange, including but not limited to:

- Length of the exchange
- Number of host families
- Student selection and orientation
- Contacts, including emergency and support services
- Student fees and stipends
- Behavioral expectations and potential disciplinary actions

Communication throughout the process is key to a successful exchange. Inform all participants of the student's travel plans and arrival date. Ask the host district about plans for meeting the student at the airport and helping them settle in with their first host family. Request confirmation from the hosting district that the student has arrived safely.

Preparing Outbound Students and Their Parents or Legal Guardians

Orientation programs vary widely from one club or district to another but should include the core topics outlined below. Districts that are part of a multidistrict group can benefit by participating in larger-scale orientation programs.

Preparing students for the exchange experience should be an ongoing process that includes weekend gatherings and shorter meetings during the year before departure. Give students reading materials about their host country and encourage them to do their own research. This gradual and relaxed process gives students a chance to absorb and react to a large amount of information.

Orientation sessions also give you the chance to make sure the student is ready for a Youth Exchange by seeing how they react to information presented in the sessions and interact with their peers and Rotarians.

Invite Youth Exchange alumni to participate in orientation; peers can provide valuable insight. Allocate enough time for students to talk with alumni so they have a better understanding of the exchange experience. If possible, include current inbound exchange students in the orientation.

IMPORTANT!
Abuse and harassment awareness and prevention training in orientation is required for all students and their parents or legal guardians in order for the district to maintain certification and participate in Youth Exchange.

OUTBOUND ORIENTATION TOPICS

To prepare students for their exchange experience, include the following topics in outbound orientation:

BASIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

- Rotary's mission and values
- What it's like being an exchange student (brief presentation by current inbound or former exchange students)
- Finances and budgeting allowance and costs
- Role of the host club and Rotarian counselor

EXPECTATIONS

- District and club rules and regulations
- Roles and responsibilities of participants and leaders
- Travel restrictions
- Being an ambassador for their country and Rotary
- Suggestions for presentations about their country at Rotary meetings
- Communicating with family and friends at home
- Tips for a successful exchange

SAFETY

- Abuse and harassment prevention, awareness training, and reporting (required)
- The country's laws and general attitude toward minority groups
- Role of Rotarian counselor in home club
- District's 24-hour contact number as well as contact information for the sending district chair, district governor, club president, Rotarian counselor, and two non-Rotarian resource people (one male and one female)

TRAVEL INFORMATION

- Passport and visa information
- Travel costs and responsibilities
- Student travel insurance and health care discussions
- Luggage and packing suggestions

CULTURAL PREPARATION

- Cross-cultural preparation and research on host country
- Adaptability and cultural tolerance
- Cultural expectations and assumptions
- Language training
- Living with host families and showing courtesy
- Gift giving
- Homesickness and effective coping strategies

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR ORIENTATION OF PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS

- Challenges of being a parent or legal guardian of an exchange student
- Financial obligations
- Travel arrangements
- Contact information and role of Rotarian counselor in home club
- Best practices for communicating with student during exchange
- Visiting the student abroad
- What parents or legal guardians can expect during and after the homecoming, such as reverse culture shock

TRAVEL SAFETY

All students and their families should understand the risks that international travel poses. Government-issued travel warnings, alerts, and bans should be taken seriously. Students and parents should review their home country's travel recommendations for their child's host country prior to the exchange. If a student's home embassy designates the host country as high risk, parents should work with their host and sending district to fully understand what this means. Local Rotarians can offer more updated information. Ultimately, parents are responsible for assessing risks and consenting to the exchange. If a student's parents or legal guardians have continued concerns about safety, they should remove their child from the program.

Engaging Parents or Legal Guardians in Youth Exchange

Support from parents or legal guardians before, during, and after a student's exchange creates a positive experience for the student and allows the parents or legal guardians to support the program's goals.

BEFORE THE EXCHANGE

It's critical to include parents or legal guardians of outbound students in the selection and orientation process so they understand what's expected of them and their child.

EXPECTATIONS AND RULES

Explain the rules and regulations of your program and how they benefit the student. Require that both parents or legal guardians and the student agree to them in writing. Include the rules that apply to parents, such as travel or communication restrictions, as well as rules that apply to the student. By understanding the purpose of the rules and committing to abide by them, parents or legal guardians can support their child in upholding them.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Costs for parents or legal guardians can vary by district and depend on scholarship offerings. The specific financial responsibilities for parents or legal guardians should be clearly outlined and agreed upon by both parties. Often parents or legal guardians pay all travel costs, including expenses for passports, visas, and travel insurance. Parents or legal guardians also cover any incidental expenses during the exchange for entertainment, snacks, or souvenirs. Your district may require an emergency fund that can be refunded, in whole or in part if not needed, after the exchange is completed.

STUDENT TRAVEL INSURANCE

The parent or legal guardian and the student are responsible for paying all medical and accident costs, and providing travel insurance including medical and dental coverage for accidental injury and illness, death benefits (including repatriation of remains), disability/dismemberment benefits (also known as capital benefits), emergency medical evacuation, emergency visitation expenses, 24-hour emergency assistance services, and legal liability (covering the student for any of his or her acts or omissions in connection with the Youth Exchange program), in line with Rotary's minimum levels of coverage as outlined in the Rotary Code of Policies. Insurance to cover cancellation expenses, loss of property, loss of money, or kidnap and ransom can also be purchased at the parent's discretion.

Because the host district must be able to provide immediate, emergency medical attention, coverage must be satisfactory to the host district, with coverage from the time the student leaves home until they return. Where it is a legal requirement for travel insurance to be purchased in the host country, such insurance must meet RI minimum levels of coverage. In all other cases, dual insurance should be avoided unless agreed to by all parties.

TRAVEL SAFETY, CONTINUED

Families should sign up for traveler notification programs through their local embassy. Should a large-scale emergency like a natural disaster, political unrest, or terrorism occur, the host district should remain in contact with the sending district, parents or guardians, and RI. Parents or guardians should, with their host and sending districts, assess the risks and agree to the student remaining in the host country or returning home. Should any one of these three parties be uncomfortable with continuing the exchange, an early return should be arranged as soon as it is safe to do so.

DURING THE EXCHANGE

STUDENT TRAVEL WHILE ON EXCHANGE

Many host districts and clubs offer students opportunities to travel as part of their exchange. Travel arranged by the host club, district, or multidistrict, such as orientation camps, district conferences, and other events, is considered customary and does not require the parent or legal guardian's permission. For all other travel, including travel with the host family or tours outside the local community (as defined by the host district), the host district must obtain written permission from the parents or legal guardians and share details about the program, location of the event, travel itineraries, sleeping accommodations, and contact information.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CHILD AND PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN

You should encourage regular but limited correspondence between parents or legal guardians and their child during the exchange. Help parents understand that too much communication can negatively impact their child's ability to immerse themselves into the host community. It's important to give the student some time to adjust to the new environment, overcome culture shock, and assimilate into their new surroundings.

PARENTAL VISITS

Discourage parents or legal guardians from visiting their child during the exchange. A visit can trigger or intensify homesickness and set back assimilation into the new culture. Emphasize that both the host district and club must approve any visit before it takes place. Should parents or legal guardians plan to visit, strongly recommend that they do so during the last two months of the exchange. They should never visit during holidays, as these celebrations offer a key cultural experience for the student and a chance for host families to involve the student in special events.

STUDENT'S SCHEDULED RETURN AND AFTER THE EXCHANGE

REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

Reverse culture shock, which often includes difficulties adjusting and disorientation upon returning home, is a significant phase of the exchange experience. It's important that parents or legal guardians understand and be prepared to manage this transition; while their lives may have remained essentially the same during the exchange, their child has likely experienced profound changes. By communicating regularly throughout the exchange, parents can have a better understanding of the student's new experiences and help them readjust after they return.

One of the most common challenges for parents or legal guardians is coping with the student's newfound independence. It's not unusual for students to find that the rules they lived under before the exchange now seem too restrictive. Being prepared for these changes will make it easier for families to respond positively.

LIFE AFTER THE EXCHANGE

Rotarians from the sending district and club can help returning students adjust to life after the exchange by maintaining communication with them and their families. Involve students and their parents or legal guardians in Rotary activities, programs, and events. Hold debriefing meetings with returned students and their parents or legal guardians to learn how you can improve your program. Connect students with alumni associations made up of other returned students. Learn more about alumni associations in chapter 6.

Maintaining Communication With Students

Clubs and districts should communicate regularly with their students abroad during the exchange. Establish a reporting procedure with each student and ask students to email updates to their Rotarian counselor from their home club or a designated Rotarian at least once a quarter. Regular communication helps your district know how the student is adapting and be aware of any challenges a student may encounter. Make sure all students have an emergency contact in your district.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some families of students going abroad benefit from hosting inbound exchange students. Not only do parents or legal guardians gain a greater awareness of another culture, but they also have a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities their child may experience abroad. Hosting is at the discretion of the family and is not a requirement for their child to participate in the program.

5

GUIDELINES FOR HOSTING A YOUTH EXCHANGE STUDENT

Host Clubs

Host Families

Selecting the Rotarian Counselor

Communicating with Students Before Arrival

Arranging a Welcome Arrival Orientation

Providing Assistance During the Exchange

Managing Early Returns

Scheduled Returns and Completion of the Exchange

Hosting a Youth Exchange student offers Rotarians and local residents the opportunity to experience another culture within their own community. Local students and community members can contribute to the exchange experience. The rewards for all involved are great, but hosting a student requires a significant time commitment for Rotarians in the host club and district.

To arrange for the best exchange experience possible, the host club and district are responsible for:

- Screening and selecting host families
- Assigning Rotarian counselors
- Coordinating inbound orientation
- Developing an effective support system

Host Clubs

The district Youth Exchange committee should work with the governor and assistant governors to identify clubs that are interested in the program and have the capacity to support an inbound student. District committee members should provide clubs with realistic expectations of the time and financial commitment that a club assumes when hosting a student. Learn more about the host club responsibilities in chapter 3.

Host Families

FINDING HOST FAMILIES

Long-term exchange students must have more than one host family — preferably three different families — during their exchange. By living in the homes of several families, students are exposed to a variety of experiences in the host country and better understand the culture as a whole. While it may not be possible to secure all three host families before the student arrives, be sure to identify a temporary backup host family in advance.

A host family should be responsible, willing, and interested in welcoming a young person from another country into their home. Host families do not need to be Rotarian families; in fact, community members often become interested in joining Rotary because of their involvement in Youth Exchange. You can find host families using the same methods you used

to advertise the program to potential students. To protect the student's privacy, do not use personally identifiable information about the student in your public promotions. In some cases, this may be prohibited by local law.

Suggestions for finding prospective host families:

- Encourage Rotarians to host students. Invite current inbound students to club meetings so members can hear, firsthand, about their experiences with host families.
- Ask Rotarians to recommend non-Rotarian families they feel are qualified and may be interested in hosting a Youth Exchange student.
- Ask families who have successfully hosted students to recommend other families in the community who might be interested in hosting.
- Ask the families of Youth Exchange alumni to act as hosts. They may appreciate the chance to take part in the program because of the opportunity it provided to their own children.
- Ask Youth Exchange alumni for the names of families they feel would make good host parents.
- Make a presentation about the Youth Exchange program to parent and community associations. Highlight the benefits of hosting and follow up with all who express interest.
- Keep in contact with Youth Exchange alumni; they may make excellent host families and future Rotarians.

SELECTING HOST FAMILIES

Share information about the program and distribute your district's host family application to families that express interest in hosting. When reviewing applications and interviewing prospective hosts, look for responsible, willing families. Identify a variety of families, including some with younger children, some with children around the age of the student, and some with no children in the home. Single parents, same-sex couples, and retirees can all make excellent hosts.

Do not settle for families who are only willing to provide room and board — seek out those who will actively enhance the exchange experience by involving students in many different community activities.

EFFECTIVE HOSTS

The most effective host families are:

- Caring and respectful with each other
- Flexible and able to adapt to having someone new in the home
- Good humored and able to put a problem or situation into perspective
- Patient and willing to work through common misunderstandings
- Willing to engage in different activities and visit places outside the home
- Interested in a variety of topics of conversation, culture, and recreation

SCREENING HOST FAMILIES

To protect students and promote a positive exchange experience, it's essential to thoroughly screen prospective host families. Clearly outline program rules and expectations and evaluate the potential host families' reasons for wanting to host. All host families must complete and sign your district's application form, adhere to the rules of the exchange, and give authorization for your district to conduct a background check or review law enforcement public record checks. Criminal background checks, including law enforcement public record checks and reference checks, must be done for all adult members of the host family.

HOST FAMILY HOME VISITS

Before selecting host families, a district or club leader must visit applicants in their home at a time when all family members who live in the home are present. During the visit, review the host family's responsibilities and give them additional club or district materials about the hosting experience. Confirm their commitment to attend required orientation and training sessions and to help their exchange student attend required Rotary activities. Both scheduled and unannounced or short-notice home visits should be made before and during the exchange.

When screening host families and visiting homes, ask the following questions:

- Why is the family interested in hosting an exchange student?
- What experience do family members have with different cultures? This could include travel abroad, professional experience, knowledge of foreign languages, and other experiences.
- What are the planned sleeping arrangements for the student? The student must have his or her own bed. If it is necessary for the student to share a room with a host sibling, it must be with one who identifies with the same gender and is preferably of similar age.
- Would they provide appropriate supervision and take on parental responsibility to ensure the student's well-being?
- How would the family incorporate an exchange student into their daily life?
- Would chores be assigned to the student? If so, what types of chores?
- What activities would the family plan to help a young person get to know their host community and country better?
- How would the student get to school and other extracurricular activities?
- How would the host parents handle difficult situations with the student, such as language and communication challenges, discipline and emotional issues, and culture shock?

Additionally, observe the home environment and consider:

- What is the general condition of the home? Is it clean with adequate light, heat, and other necessities?
- Does the family have the necessary resources to host a student, such as adequate space and time?
- Is it likely that a student would be physically and emotionally safe in the home?

PLACING STUDENTS WITH HOST FAMILIES

Once a host family has met all screening and training requirements, they can be matched with an exchange student. Host families must receive training that includes information on program administration and rules, as well as abuse and harassment awareness and prevention. In making a good match for both students and families, consider:

- Similar interests (recreation, hobbies, sports, and cultural activities)
- The ages of any host siblings
- Personalities and values of all the parties

It's best to place students with their first host family immediately upon arrival in their host country rather than making a temporary placement. This helps smooth the transition to the student's new home.

Host families are essential to the program, and Rotarians in the host club should work to maintain a positive relationship with the families. Invite them to club events and show appreciation in person and through written thank-you notes. Suggest creating a host family networking group that can meet monthly to share ideas and experiences. Following an exchange, ask families to complete an evaluation form. Cultivating an open and positive relationship with host families increases the possibility that they will want to host students in the future or perhaps even become Rotarians.

Occasionally, a host family situation does not work, and the student must be moved. All hosting programs should have at least one prescreened host family available to accept a student in an emergency or on a temporary basis. Try to find an experienced host family that is skilled in problem solving and working with youth in crisis situations.

Selecting the Rotarian Counselor

The Rotarian counselor is critical to the success of an exchange. When assigning exchange students to a counselor consider:

- Gender — Assign counselors of the same gender identification as students when possible. If a student has a counselor of a different gender identification, assign a person of the same gender identification (either Rotarian or non-Rotarian) as an additional resource person.
- Time commitment — Assess how many students one counselor can effectively supervise.

Learn more about the profile and responsibilities of Rotarian counselors in chapter 3.

Communicating With Students Before Arrival

Once inbound students have been assigned to counselors and host families, send the following welcome and orientation materials:

- General schedule of the exchange year, including district meetings, outings, travel opportunities, and other activities
- Name and contact information for the first host family
- Name and contact information for the Rotarian counselor
- General information about the community and country (local geography, history, government) and the culture (colloquial phrases, meaning of certain gestures, customary greetings, holiday traditions, social customs, religious beliefs and practices)
- Practical information about climate, clothing, and school
- District rules, student travel insurance requirements, student fees and stipends, and emergency fund amounts
- Expectations about speaking engagements at clubs

In addition, the host club and district should help inbound students obtain visas, make arrangements for meeting them at the airport, and coordinate any enrollment and tuition payment at local schools. Encourage communication between the student and the first host family and Rotarian counselor before the student's arrival to establish a connection with these two critical resources and ease the transition once the student arrives.

Arranging a Welcome Arrival Orientation

Meet all students upon arrival and introduce them to the first host family. Hold a formal inbound orientation shortly after the student's arrival, either as a group, such as at a district or multidistrict orientation, or individually. Rotarian counselors should be present at the orientation meeting, but try to also include as many club members as possible.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

- Rules and regulations for students established by the host club, district, or multidistrict
- Consequences for breaking a program rule, and early return policy
- Policy on student travel, including forms and permission needed
- Monthly allowance
- Host contact information for district chair, district governor, club president, and Rotarian counselor

EXPECTATIONS

- Student's role as a Rotary ambassador
- Participation in Rotary club meetings and at local Rotary events
- Communication with home (family, friends, and sending district)
- School attendance and participation in extracurricular activities
- Use of computers, cell phones, internet, social media, and email

CULTURAL CONTEXT

- Local customs and colloquial phrases
- Information about gestures, personal space, and communication differences
- Personal and interpersonal dos and don'ts
- School culture and expectations

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Abuse and harassment awareness and prevention, and how to report these allegations
- District 24-hour contact number and contact information for two non-Rotarian resource people, one male and one female
- Contacts for local medical, dental, and mental health professionals
- Local social service resources, where available, including suicide prevention hotlines, rape crisis hotlines, and child protection and law enforcement agencies
- Information on local laws and customs that apply to young people

Providing Assistance During the Exchange

Throughout the exchange, the Rotarian counselor and members of the host club should communicate regularly with the student, make any necessary financial arrangements, such as the student's monthly allowance and emergency fund, and facilitate the transition from one host family to the next.

The Rotarian counselor should be available to the student at all times to discuss questions or concerns about the host family or the school. Find a place to talk about such issues away from the host family. In addition to responding to calls from the student, the Rotarian counselor should initiate communication with the student at least once a month by phone or in-person. The counselor or another qualified Rotarian should visit the student in the host family's home to make sure living arrangements are consistent with what was agreed upon during the screening.

Invite students to cultural and social gatherings. Whether a music lesson, a museum tour, or just meeting for a cup of coffee or tea, taking time early on to build a strong relationship with the student can make it easier to identify and manage problems later on. Continue to support the student's assimilation as needed to help the student cope with specific cultural issues. Work with the community and the student's school to get the student involved in positive activities and community life.

TRANSITIONING TO NEW HOST FAMILIES

Host clubs and Rotarian counselors should help students make the transition from one host family to the next. To make this process as smooth as possible:

- Give the student advance notice, including an exact date for the move. If possible, arrange for the student to meet the family and visit their home before the move.
- Provide the new host family's contact information to the student and the student's parents or legal guardians before the move.
- Help the student move all belongings to the new home and get acquainted with the host family.

STUDENTS AND ILLEGAL ACTIVITY

If a student is a witness to or victim of a crime, the decision to return early or stay should be left to the student and his or her parents or guardians. This choice is especially important for victims of sexual abuse or harassment, who may feel that being sent home early from the exchange is a punishment for reporting. If a student elects to return home, confirm with local law enforcement that he or she isn't needed in the host country as a witness before making travel arrangements. If a student is accused of a crime, local law enforcement will determine if and when the student can leave the country.

Managing Early Returns

Exchange students can and do return home early for a variety of reasons; all participating districts should be prepared to handle early returns. Some leave because of homesickness, illness, or issues back home. Others are sent home because of problems that occur in the host country during the exchange. A student can be sent home for violating a district Youth Exchange program rule, geopolitical crises, or other health and safety issues that may arise during the exchange.

Outlining the district's program rules and potential disciplinary actions up to and including an early return will help ensure all parties are in agreement and avoid conflicts or ambiguity in actions taken should the student violate any program rules. Not all violations of the rules should warrant an immediate early return. Use of an exchange agreement can help provide a written understanding between all parties. Care should be taken to apply program rules consistently to avoid perceptions of unfairness.

Early returns should be managed delicately and always with the full knowledge of the sending club and district and the student's parents or legal guardians. While host districts have authority over a decision to send a student home early, whatever the cause of the early return, do not send a student home until both the hosting and sending district agree to specific travel arrangements and the student's parents or legal guardians have been notified. When the sending and hosting districts disagree about an early return, district governors should be notified and assist in mediation.

When faced with an early return of an inbound student, the host district should take the following steps:

1. Discuss the situation with the student and the Rotarian counselor.
2. Contact your counterpart in the sending district, and explain the reasons the student is being sent home. If you are corresponding by email, copy any relevant multidistrict groups on the communication.
3. Allow the student to contact his or her parents or legal guardians, and work with the sending district to facilitate communication with them as well.
4. Work with the sending district contact and the parents or legal guardians to arrange an acceptable return travel itinerary.
5. Help the student make departure arrangements and facilitate farewells with the host family and school friends.
6. If there are concerns over the student's safety or health, consult local law enforcement or medical professionals to determine when it is safe for the student to return home. Make additional arrangements for the student's return trip, such as a medical chaperone, if necessary.
7. Notify relevant government and insurance agencies about visa and student travel insurance status.
8. Notify the district governor and Rotary Youth Exchange staff within 72 hours in writing that a student is being sent home. Include the name of the student, sending district, date of return, and reasons for return.

9. Confirm the student's safe arrival, and work with the sending district to offer support services where necessary.
10. Use tact and sensitivity when notifying classmates, other exchange students, and members of the host club about the circumstances for the early return to respect the student's privacy.

Scheduled Returns and Completion of the Exchange

During the final weeks of an exchange, many students struggle with conflicting emotions about returning home and leaving the new family and friends they've made. Hosting clubs and districts should work with students to make the transition as smooth as possible.

- Involve host families — The host family may begin to feel neglected as the student becomes increasingly involved in year-end school activities and social gatherings. Help them anticipate some of the emotions they may experience when it's time for the student to return home.
- Plan end-of-year activities — Give exchange students a chance to say goodbye to the people they've met throughout the year. While not a standard practice for all exchanges, some programs arrange travel opportunities for students to allow them to see more of the host country before returning home. Make sure students and their parents and legal guardians are aware of the costs and logistics associated with optional tours in advance, and that student travel insurance coverage and travel arrangements are made in accordance with RI's policy for travel by Youth Exchange students.
- Finalize travel arrangements — Work with the student's parents or legal guardians and sending district to finalize travel plans. Help the student with packing, shipping, and planning for departure.
- Invite students to participate in orientation for students departing for exchanges — Help outbound students from your district prepare for the year ahead by organizing a special orientation session with the students you are currently hosting that focuses on the year in review, the re-entry process, and preparation for reverse culture shock.
- Conduct evaluations — Survey all program participants — students, host families, Rotarian counselors, and others — to gather insight and information to assist in future exchanges.

6

STAYING CONNECTED AS ALUMNI

The Rotary experience doesn't have to end when students return home from their exchange. Students who return from their exchange are considered Rotary alumni and forever remain a part of the Rotary family. As Youth Exchange alumni return home, Rotarians from the sending district should make an effort to welcome them back and help them find ways to continue to benefit from Rotary's programs and contribute to Rotary service.

WELCOME ALUMNI BACK

- Youth Exchange alumni are often brimming with excitement and eager to talk about their experiences when they return home from their travels abroad. Invite alumni to speak about their trip at club meetings throughout the district. Not only can this motivate other Rotarians to become involved in Youth Exchange, it also helps alumni build connections throughout your district.
- Hold a welcome party for all returning Youth Exchange students. Invite other alumni, including other Youth Exchange alumni and alumni from other Rotary programs. Events like this help new Youth Exchange alumni build their personal and professional networks by fostering introductions to people who have shared similar experiences.

MENTOR ALUMNI

- Alumni will look to you to help them understand their next steps in Rotary. Continue to meet with returning students to understand their hopes for the future and how Rotary can be a part.
- Help them find or start local Interact or Rotaract clubs so they can continue their Rotary service.
- If returning students intend to travel elsewhere after their Youth Exchange, introduce them to Rotarians in other Rotary districts where they'll be travelling. Take advantage of your own Rotary networks to make their transition to a new city easier.

SUPPORT AN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

- Help alumni find or start a local Rotex or Rotary alumni association in which they can continue to network with others who have shared similar experiences.

CONNECT WITH OTHER DISTRICT LEADERS

- Many Rotarians in your district may have experience working with alumni of both Youth Exchange and other Rotary programs. They can share their best practices for engaging alumni.
- Your local district alumni chair can help provide access to a wider world of alumni of all ages and from all Rotary programs.
- Your local Rotaract or Interact chair can help you understand how to be involved in these types of clubs as a next step in one's Rotary career.
- A scholarship or grants chair can help returning students understand how Rotary can fund future education or support their ideas for local or international service.

Rotary International's alumni relations team can help connect districts and alumni to opportunities and resources for alumni. For more support, email **alumni@rotary.org**.

ROTEX ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

Rotary alumni associations are groups of former program participants, often based in a district or geographic region, that offer opportunities for alumni to meet socially and professionally and stay connected to Rotary. Alumni associations for former Youth Exchange participants are called Rotex. When Rotex groups are well organized, they play a major role in mentoring current exchange students. Some also coordinate sightseeing trips for exchange students being hosted in their districts and lead orientations for sending and welcoming students. Rotex groups also frequently support Rotary service projects or undertake their own.

7

YOUTH EXCHANGE RESOURCES

Online Tools

Communications and Publications

Networking and Regional Resources

Online Tools

Protecting Youth Program Participants — Online course for club-level leaders of youth programs that provides an overview of Rotary's key policies on youth protection. Available through the Learning Center.

Brand Center — Promote your club and district's Youth Exchange program with custom logos, cards, and posters. Find all this and more, including downloadable Youth Exchange banners, in the Brand Center.

Shop Rotary — Download or purchase Youth Exchange cards to promote short- and long-term exchanges.

Communications and Publications

Rotary Youth Protection Guide — Designed to help Rotarians provide a safe and secure environment for participants in Rotary's youth programs. Includes sample youth protection guides and volunteer agreement.

Youth Exchange Official Directory — Global listing of contact information for current district Youth Exchange chairs and multidistrict officers available for current district and multidistrict Youth Exchange chairs, governors, or governors-elect. Accessed in your **My Rotary** account or by emailing **youthexchange@rotary.org**.

List of noncertified districts — Districts must be certified to participate in a Rotary Youth Exchange. Before initiating a new exchange, check this list to ensure potential districts are certified.

Rotary Youth Exchange Newsletter — Bimonthly newsletter with information and updates on current Youth Exchange events and resources.

Youth Exchange Certificate — Presented to Youth Exchange students at the end of their exchange. Customizable; requires signature of district Youth Exchange committee chair.

Rotary Youth Exchange Workgroup — Online workgroup for current district and multidistrict Youth Exchange chairs, governors, and governors-elect. Contains Youth Exchange resources such as the Youth Exchange Officers Directory, incident and early return reporting forms, resource guides, and global communications. Available through your **My Rotary** account.

Networking and Regional Resources

These resources are not produced by Rotary International. However, Rotary recommends these resources for districts participating in Youth Exchange.

YEOTalk — Message groups created and administered by Youth Exchange officers. Available in **Google Groups** and **Facebook**.

Rotary Youth Exchange Officer resources — Useful documents created by a regional group of Rotary Youth Exchange officers.

Regional Youth Exchange groups — Regional Youth Exchange groups are associations composed of Rotary clubs, districts, and multidistrict groups that work together in their region and locally to support the Youth Exchange program. Activities include hosting conferences and sharing ideas, best practices, and resources.

- **North American Youth Exchange Network (NAYEN)**
- **Europe, Eastern Mediterranean, and Africa (EEMA)**
- **Rotary Youth Exchange Australia (RYEA)**
- **Associação Brasileira de Intercâmbio de Jovens (ABIJ)**

One Rotary Center
1560 Sherman Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201-3698 USA
Rotary.org

746-EN—(1218)